Department of Student Activities
Student Leader Inclusive Learning Outcomes
2021-2022

Purpose of Assessment

Beginning in December, Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) and staff from the Department of Student Activities met with student leaders from multiple sponsored and affiliated Texas A&M University student organizations to gain input in developing student leader learning outcomes. These outcomes associated with the Texas A&M University undergraduate learning outcomes practice personal and social responsibility and demonstrate social, cultural and global competence (https://catalog.tamu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/student-learning-outcomes). However, the learning outcomes conceived and written in conjunction with student leaders more closely related to their experiences as a student leader within their organizations. The final two learning outcomes created from these meetings were:

- Student leadership involved in my student organization will develop skills to recognize, describe and balance professional and personal boundaries, including holding others accountable, while serving their student organization's mission.
- Student leadership involved in student organization(s) will tailor activities to foster inclusion by considering the impacts on different participants, while preserving the intended experience. Activities can include, but are not exclusive to, programming, development trainings, general meetings, and recruitment activities.

In April, an assessment was created to gain insight from student organization leaders about experiences within their student organizations within the last academic year as they related to these learning outcomes.

Key Findings with Recommendations

SAPAR identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, Student Activities staff and student leaders may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the community and are strongly encouraged to read all the results to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences.

- Within the first three weeks of their tenure within their leadership position, over half (56%) of respondents reported they could consistently recognize, establish and maintain professional and personal boundaries with friends and others in their student organizations, and after staying in their positions for the remainder of the year, 85% reported the same. Respondents described that they learned to manage the challenges in keeping professional and personal boundaries with their friends and others by clearly communicating expectations, asking questions of those peers when tasks assigned to them went unfinished, and reminding them of their common purpose and goals to better their organizations. Respondents also described relying on other student leaders within their organizations to help keep themselves, friends and others within the organization accountable.
  - Some student leaders also reported struggling with maintaining the balance of friendship within their organizations and holding those friends accountable for completing tasks to achieve the goals of the organization. Providing intentional conflict management training that includes techniques which help leaders manage conflict but also maintain relationships and provides practice using those techniques may increase student leader confidence in holding their peers accountable.

- About half of respondents indicated planning activities which included gathering others' diverse perspectives regarding the activity, and strategizing some changes that could attract more diverse participants to the activity. However less than one-fifth indicated that those actions resulted in change to the activity which then included more diverse participants. When asked to describe how they considered impacts of their activities on different participants and how it differed from previous years, respondents

spoke of strategizing recruitment activities to expand their membership, bringing in more diverse speakers for programs, and considering the varied dietary needs of participants. One respondent talked about a diversity and inclusion activity members participated in, which leaders assessed and planned for future changes to improve its inclusivity, but otherwise responses did not describe expansive strategies to improve the inclusiveness of their activities.

- o Efforts to strategize and improve inclusivity of activities may be helped by understanding more about current participants, specifically demographics of ethnicity and race, first generation in college status, college or school of participants and other factors of participants' identity. Understanding more about those who participate can help understand how to better strategize marketing efforts to appeal to more diverse populations to increase inclusivity. Please contact SAPAR for assistance in this effort.

- Sharing these results with student leaders involved in development of the learning outcomes, as well as other student leadership is highly recommended as students return to campus to begin the 2022-2023 academic year. Please contact SAPAR for assistance if needed to present these results as well as to discuss the recommendations and assessing student leader learning in the upcoming year.

Method and Sample

The assessment questions developed and tested in collaboration with student leaders who helped create the learning outcomes, Student Activities advisors and SAPAR staff. The assessment was produced using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. It contained seven questions, of which 5 were quantitative and two were qualitative; due to branching technology, not all questions were displayed to all respondents. Data from the survey were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, Microsoft Excel® and Microsoft Word®.

The assessment was distributed via an open link and QR code by Student Activities staff and student leaders to student leaders of 35 affiliated and sponsored student organizations beginning April 12, 2022 and ending May 27, 2022. Fifty-two students representing 18 student organizations answered at least one question within the assessment.

Results

Results are reported as frequency percentages, means, and standard deviation (s.d.) for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are in descending mean or frequency order unless otherwise specified. Summary themes are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Quantitative results cross-tabulated by student organization in which respondents indicated membership can be found in the attached data documents.

The first question asked the responder in a select-all-that-apply question to indicate of which organization were they a leader. Noted on the next page in Table 1, nearly one-third of the respondents selected CARPOOL. Over 50% of the organizations listed were selected by at least one respondent. Two-percent (2%) equals one respondent.

Organization Name	Frequency Percentage
CARPOOL	29%
Gilbert Leadership Conference	13%

Organization Name	Frequency Percentage
SGA Executive Cabinet	11%
Maroon & White Leadership Program	7%
Collegiate Pan-Hellenic Council (CPC)	4%
Conference on Student Government Association (COSGA)	4%
Fish Camp	4%
Judicial Court	4%
Replant	4%
12th Can	4%
Aggie Muster	2%
Aggies & Mentors	2%
Alternative Spring Break	2%
Fish Aides	2%
The Big Event	2%
Student Government Association (SGA) Diversity Commission	2%
SGA Legislative Relations Commission	2%
SGA Election Commission	2%
Class Councils Class of '23	2%
Aggie Transition Camps (ATC)	2%
Class Councils Class of '24	--
Class Councils Class of '22	--
Class Councils Class of '21	--
Class Councils Executive team	--
Aggie Recruitment Committee	--
Career Closet	--
Freshmen Leadership Advisory Council	--
Maroon Out	--
Interfraternity Council (IFC)	--
National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)	--
Multicultural Greek Council (MGC)	--
Order of the Omega	--
Traditions Council	--
SGA Development Commission	--
Student Senate	--

Table 1: Respondent Student Organization (n=52)

Respondents were next shown the student learning outcome developed by their fellow student leaders: *Student leadership involved in my student organization(s) will develop skills to recognize, describe and balance professional and personal boundaries, including holding others accountable, while serving the student organization's mission.* Then, respondents were provided three scenarios associated with their skill in recognizing, describing and balancing professional and personal boundaries and were asked to self-report which scenario of those three best described them within the first three months of their leadership position. Next, respondents were again asked to select from three similar scenarios which one best described them for the remainder of their leadership position. Table 2, on the next page, shows that in the first three months of being in their leadership position over half reported they could consistently recognize, establish and maintain professional and personal boundaries (the highest rated scenario). Still, when reporting the scenario that best described them for the remainder of their leadership position, 25 percentage points more respondents selected that highest level scenario. When comparing the "after" mean (remainder of their leadership

position) with the "before" mean (first three months within their leadership position), a paired sample t test showed the "after" mean was significantly higher, and this difference was of moderate size ($t(33) = 3.02$, $p = .005$, $d_z = .52$).

In the first three months of your leadership position, *which scenario described you best?*	I was able to consistently recognize, establish, and maintain professional and personal boundaries with friends and others in my organization. (3)	I was able to recognize and establish professional and personal boundaries with others in my organization, including my friends, but at times found it difficult to maintain those boundaries. (2)	I found it difficult to recognize, establish, and maintain professional and personal boundaries with others in my organizations, particularly those who I considered my friends. (1)	**Mean (sd)**
	56%	44%	--	2.56 (.50)
For the remainder of your leadership position, *which scenario has described you the best?*	I continue to find it difficult to recognize, establish, and maintain professional and personal boundaries with others in my organizations, particularly those who I consider my friends. (3)	I have been able to effectively recognize and establish professional and personal boundaries with others in my organization, including my friends, but at times still find it difficult to maintain those boundaries. (2)	I continue to find it difficult to recognize, establish, and maintain professional and personal boundaries with others in my organizations, particularly those who I consider my friends. (1)	
	85%	12%	3%	2.82 (.46)

Table 2: Student Leader Experiences Maintaining Boundaries (n=34)

When reviewing results by individual respondents, 22 (65%) reported no growth, 11 (32%) reported one step growth from their first three months to the remainder of their leadership position, one (3%) reported taking one step back and none reported two step growth. Of those who reported one step growth, all grew from step two to step three. Of those reporting no growth, 18 or 86% reported themselves at level three in the first three months and remained at that level for the remainder of the leadership position. Four or 14% reported staying at level two from the first three months of their position through the remainder of their leadership position. The student leader who reported a one step drop indicated they started at level two in the first three months of their leadership position but then dropped down to level one in the remainder of the leadership position.

Respondents were then asked to describe a situation when their friendship with a fellow organization member was challenged by a decision or action taken within their role in the organization. They were also asked to describe how they were able to resolve that conflict or challenge. Twenty-three students complied; over half (13) described a situation when their role as leader challenged or conflicted with friendships/personal relationships with their fellow members. Half (12 respondents) also described how they resolved the conflicts and challenges arising from the mixture of their professional roles as leaders and their friendships with fellow members, although some did not fully describe the situation leading to the conflict or challenge. Five indicated they did not have this experience in their student leader role, or indicated it was not applicable. One student leader relayed they found it difficult to tell others when they were not meeting expectations in fear of hurting the relationship and noted they had not been able to overcome this struggle despite four years in leadership roles.

Those who described situations when friendships were challenged by their decisions or actions within an organization generally described situations where their peer(s) were not meeting expectations or completing tasks, in circumstances where performance expectations had been clear or explicit, but also in circumstances where those expectations had been more implicit. When describing how they resolved the challenge, two said they relied solely on positional authority, although one noted in doing so their personal relationship suffered which later was resolved by continuing to communicate with their fellow member. Others described resolving the conflict between the personal and professional relationship by reflecting upon their own expectations, clearly identifying what tasks were incomplete or performance that was lacking from their peer, then meeting to discuss the situation, communicate more clearly and come up with a mediated resolution. A few also described asking their peer about personal issues or challenges they may be facing that contributed to the less desirable behavior or lack of action. Most also mentioned highlighting the common purpose and goal of the organization, which they felt helped in keeping their peers accountable to their commitment. One respondent described reaching out to a fellow leader for support, as the behaviors (or lack of) from their friend was hurting the organization as a whole and the leader felt the removal of the friend from their organizational role was needed and the personal relationship was making that task difficult.

Within the assessment, respondents were next shown the second student learning outcome developed by their fellow student leaders: *Student leadership involved in my student organization(s) will tailor activities to foster inclusion by considering the impacts on different participants while preserving the intended experience. Activities can include, but are not exclusive to, programming, development trainings, general meetings, and recruitment activities.* Following that statement, respondents were asked in a select-all-that-apply question, to select what types of activities they plan. Noted in Table 3, programming events was most frequently selected by over half of the respondents, followed by general meetings. Those who chose other could write in their response, and seven wrote in responses such as meeting with leadership team, roundtables, alumni events, marketing events and OPS.

Activity type	Frequency Percentage
Programming Events	55%
General Meetings	49%
Training development for members	42%
Recruitment Activities	39%
Other	24%

Table 3: Types of Activities Student Leaders Plan (n=33)

Next the respondents were provided five descriptions of approaches to planning and were asked to select which best described their approach to planning most activities this year. Descriptions were coded within the assessment based on the degree of inclusivity the approach described, with one representing the least inclusive approach and five representing the most inclusive approach. As shown in Table 4, on the next page, over half of the respondents selected the second-most inclusive approach to planning, which included planning some changes which could possibly result in attracting diverse participants in the activity. Breakdown of the responses by types of activities selected by the student leaders can be found in the attached data documents.

Approach to planning activities	Frequency Percentage
Planning included gathering others' diverse perspectives regarding the activity, and strategizing some changes that could attract more diverse participants to the activity (4)	52%

Planning included gaining and incorporating others' diverse perspectives, resulting in change to the activity which included more diverse participants. (5)	15%
Planning included reaching out to learn about the appeal of the activity based on others' diverse perspectives, although little change to the activity and participants was expected. (3)	15%
Planning needed few changes so activity would attract similar participants to previous years. (2)	6%
Planning needed little to no change as participants and activity would be similar as previous years. (1)	3%

Table 4: Approaches to Planning Efforts to Improve Inclusivity (n=33)

The final question asked respondents to describe how the activities they planned this year with their organization considered the impacts of that activity on different participants and what various perspectives or experiences, if any, did they include in planning that differed from previous years. Nineteen responded, and 15 described how they considered impacts of their activities on different participants. Respondents mentioned strategizing recruitment to include more diverse members with new activities at recruiting events, featuring more diverse speakers during programming, and offering varying types of work activities, like small group work or online collaborations, in an effort to be more inclusive of members' preferences. Two respondents noted that they were returning to sponsoring in-person events and hence considered the needs and preferences of attendees regarding COVID protections. Two others mentioned considering dietary preferences and needs within their program and member meetings. One respondent described including diversity and inclusion activities, which highlighted awareness of privilege, then assessing the success of the activities and planning changes for the future to improve inclusiveness of the activities.

Background

Per its website https://studentactivities.tamu.edu/about-us/, the Department of Student Activities "fosters and supports leadership, learning, and involvement opportunities that enhance the growth and development of students and recognized student organizations. As members of the university community, we are committed to a philosophy of shared responsibility that develops leaders of character dedicated to serving the greater good, and we subscribe to the Texas A&M core values of Respect, Excellence, Leadership, Loyalty, Integrity, and Selfless Service."

Project Details

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) provides quality assessment services, resources and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) can be found at https://sapar.tamu.edu/results/. Additionally, anyone can follow Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research on Facebook.

To work with Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at https://sapar.tamu.edu/aqform/.

Report Prepared for: Dylan Murray and Jennifer Boyle, Department of Student Activities

Report Prepared by: Susan Fox-Forrester, Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research
Report Prepared on: June 23, 2022; amended August 15, 2022
Survey Created by: Susan Fox-Forrester, Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research
Analysis Prepared by: Judith Barrera, and Dr. Robert Tirso, Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research